

USFK AFTER THE REUNIFICATION

**A MONOGRAPH
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Finally, the monograph evaluates several options for USFK after reunification to demonstrate the difficulty of developing operational endstate and the need to derive this required element early in the campaign.

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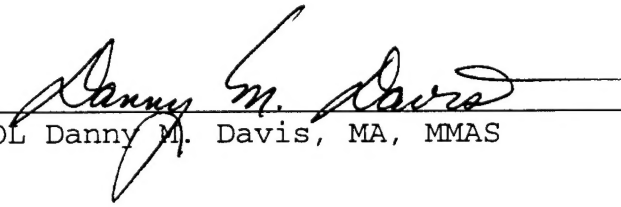
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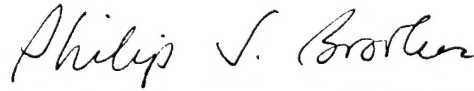
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I. INTRODUCTION

The main thing is to always have a plan; if it is not the best plan, it is at least better than no plan at all.

General Sir John Monash, 1918

Many analysts believe the two Koreas are likely to reunify in the near future. There are many reasons for these beliefs. North Korea's economy is weak and unlikely to recover. Famine has spread throughout the country. North Korea has also lost much of its political and military support with the collapse of the Soviet Union. The recent death of Kim Il Sung, North Korea's only president, and the resulting transition of power have led to instability and rumors of a power struggle. Its recent contentious dealings with the West have also focused the world's disdain on North Korea. North Korea seems ready to collapse or is at least ripe for change. Conversely, South Korea is strong economically and gaining support from new trading partners. The South Koreans are strengthening diplomatic and economic relations with China, Japan, and Russia. South Korean businesses are making inroads in relations with the North and previously unimaginable opportunities are developing for South Korean influence in North Korean affairs. South Korea is getting stronger while the North seems likely to fall apart.¹

These developments signal the possibility of Korean reunification. The Republic of Korea (ROK) has already begun planning for reunification under terms favorable to the South.² The South Koreans are developing detailed plans in part as an

attempt to prevent economic problems similar to Germany's reunification experience of the early 1990s. Planning includes a wide range of considerations from preparation for the economic and social costs of unification to the military needs of a reunified Korea.

This paper examines whether the United States should be conducting its own Korean reunification planning. Specifically, it examines the need to determine the role of US Forces Korea (USFK) after reunification. To focus the discussion, this research assumes that a peaceful reunification will come in the next ten to fifteen years under terms favorable to both the ROK and the US. The existing South Korean government or a newly formed government developed under the current ROK constitutional system will govern a reunified Korea.

Currently, the United States has not released any plan for the role of USFK after reunification. Although this does not indicate a lack of planning, other events do. Since 1994, the US seems to have adopted a wait and see approach to unification and the future of USFK. The US former Secretary of Defense, William J. Perry said, "...the US Military will revise its troops and military arrangements in East Asia if the peaceful reunification of the Korean peninsula is realized."³ President William J. Clinton, however, has stated that US troops will remain in Korea as long as they are welcome.⁴ In 1997, Admiral Joseph A. Preuher, commander of the US Pacific Command, remarked that US force levels in Korea will be contingent on "...how the reconciliation takes place" between the two Koreas.⁵

Although these remarks are consistent and logical, the US leaders seem to be indicating the US does not have a viable or clearly understood plan for the role of US forces in Korea after reunification. This lack of planning may become a problem for the US. As Lieutenant Colonel John Betts, a student at the Industrial College of the Armed Forces, puts it;

...once reunification occurs, 'events' will move very quickly, and US military assets may be forced to withdraw rapidly in response to public opinion - both Korean and American. And once withdrawn, they will probably never return.⁶

The US could find itself reacting to reunification rather than executing a plan for USFK that supports US strategic goals in the Pacific.

This monograph addresses this problem of US planning by examining it in seven sections. First, a discussion of the history and reasoning behind US involvement in Korea establishes a basis for understanding the problem. The next section, Campaign Planning, reveals the problems with the US 'wait and see' approach to reunification. Following the campaign description, section IV examines regional views on Korean unification to identify the international tensions, considerations and concerns the US will confront in the Pacific and post-unification Korea. In section V, the monograph examines the problem from the US domestic viewpoint. This section outlines likely US Congressional views and American public opinion regarding continued military presence in Korea. Section V also describes several alternative options to retaining forces in Korea. Through careful evaluation and analysis, section

VI considers these alternatives and recommends an option for USFK after reunification. Finally, section VII is the conclusion.

II. US Involvement in Korea

...the United States has found a bastion in Korea for the security of the whole Pacific area including Japan.
Jae Kyu Park, US-Korean Relations 1882-1982

Modern US military involvement in Korea dates to 1945 and the end of World War II. In the summer of 1945, the US and the Soviet Union agreed to share the administration of Korea. This was to be a short term solution lasting only until the Korean government could recover from the long Japanese occupation. Two US military officers, pressed for time during the planning for post-war Korea, picked the 38th parallel as the dividing line between the Soviet and US zones of administration. These officers were among the first to make US military policy for Korea and inadvertently set the stage for the creation of a divided Korea.⁷

The US military administered South Korea until 1948 when the Republic of Korea(ROK) was established. In June 1950, the US returned to respond to a North Korean invasion and fought the Korean War. After the war ended, South Korea established a mutual defense alliance with the US that helped to guarantee South Korea's survival. This 1953 alliance provided for stationing of US troops in Korea to deter any future North Korean offensive operations or aggression.

Since the Korean War, the US has maintained both ground and air units in South Korea. Although these forces have undergone a

40 percent reduction since 1971, the US has continued to guarantee the security of South Korea.⁸ Current US forces in South Korea include the 2nd Infantry Division, minus one brigade, and its supporting units, the 8th Army headquarters, and an air wing. In Japan, the US maintains one Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF), an Army special forces battalion and one and a half more air wings that are prepared to respond rapidly to a conflict in Korea. Finally, the US has contingency forces in Hawaii and the continental United States, including the other brigade of the 2d Infantry Division, that are also prepared to deploy to Korea.⁹

The US-ROK Mutual Security Treaty of 1953 is the cornerstone of the continued US military involvement in South Korea. Although the treaty aims at the North Korean threat, it requires the US and South Korea to defend each other if either is threatened by **any** military attack in the Pacific region. It also requires the two countries to develop means to deter those attacks regardless of the attacker. Finally, and most important to this study, the agreement gives the US basing rights for its armed forces in Korea.¹⁰ The Mutual Security Treaty is still in effect and is, in part, responsible for the current US troop deployments in Korea.

The US has strategic goals in East Asia that also account for the presence of US troops in Korea. The US National Security Strategy (NSS) and National Military Strategy (NMS) outline these. The NSS is the primary document that describes the US strategy for insuring national security. The NMS relates how the US military will facilitate US strategy objectives found in the NSS. According to the NSS, the US will protect its security by

remaining engaged in world politics and advancing the cause of democracy and human rights. As part of this strategy, the US believes in providing a credible overseas presence of its military. The NSS describes this presence and its benefits;

US forces must also be forward deployed or stationed in key overseas regions in peacetime to deter aggression and advance US strategic interests. Such overseas presence demonstrates our commitment to allies and friends, underwrites regional stability...and provides timely initial response capabilities.¹¹

The NMS echoes the importance of overseas presence as a force for regional stability, deterrence, and to demonstrate the US commitment to its allies.¹²

The NSS is very specific about how overseas presence in Asia supports national security. It details the importance of the East Asia and Pacific region. The East Asia and Pacific region includes Korea and, according to the NSS, is the region with the most pronounced need for continued US engagement. The NSS describes the interdependence of the US economy and the region's growing economies and makes it clear this interdependence is vital to the security of the US.¹³ The economies of Japan, Korea, China and others in the region are so important that any threat to these economies is a direct threat to the US economy. The NSS assumes that any threat to the US economy also threatens the national security of the United States.

The NSS goes on to state how the US will ensure its security in the region;

Our deep, bilateral ties with such allies as Japan,

South Korea, Australia, Thailand, and the Philippines, and a continued American military presence will serve as the foundation for America's security role in the region.¹⁴

This explains why the United States remains engaged in a broader sense in East Asia and the Pacific.

As part of this security strategy, Korea plays a special role in US interests in the region. The US, and many of its allies, see North Korean aggression as the major threat to regional security. A Korean war or increased military threats (for instance, weapons of mass destruction) from North Korea would jeopardize American operational interests in Korea and strategic interests in the region. To reduce the risk and likelihood of conflict on the peninsula, the US maintains a robust military presence in South Korea. These forces and close defense ties with the ROK provide an important capability to deter the primary threat to US interests in the region.¹⁵

President Clinton, in a speech to the South Korean Assembly, implied that the US would also work toward a peaceful reunification of Korea under terms favorable to the ROK.¹⁶ This publicly stated goal is not mentioned in the NSS or NMS. Regardless, this is an important goal for US national security. Peaceful reunification neatly fits into the US goals for the region. Reunification will most likely remove the major recognized threat to regional stability by eliminating hostilities on the Korean peninsula. It also advances the US policy of enlargement by moving another country into the fold of democratic nations.

Traditionally, US involvement in Korea focused on the defense of South Korea from the North. Today that requirement still exists as part of a wider view of US national security. Now, however, there are three major US goals in East Asia that fuel continued US involvement in Korea. They are: regional security, economic well being, and reunification of Korea. The means to achieve these goals are found in the NSS and NMS and include credible overseas presence, engagement, and enlargement. The US will likely remain involved in Korea until it achieves these objectives. However, the plan to reach these strategic goals is missing a key piece. The next section describes the doctrine of campaign planning to point out this fault.

III. Campaign Planning

...plans cover every aspect of war, and weave them all into a single operation that must have a single ultimate objective in which all particular aims are reconciled.
Clausewitz

A campaign "...is a series of related military operations aimed to achieve strategic and operational objectives within a given time and space."¹⁷ The US military achieves its strategic and operational objectives by linking separate events together in a campaign. In a campaign, the successful completion of operational and tactical events realize the strategic goals. Although it is easy to assume campaigns include only combat operations, they also include military operations outside of combat. Campaigns in a large theater may also consist of subordinate campaigns. These subordinate campaigns usually focus

on one section of the theater. Campaigns are an essential part of the operational level of war. The operational level of war is the link that binds tactical events together and links them to theater or national strategic goals.¹⁸

The US military is conducting an operational level campaign in Korea. Since 1945, the US has conducted numerous military operations, during both war and peace, in Korea from the military administration of the country to the defense of South Korea. This subordinate campaign in Korea has been aimed at achieving the strategic campaign goals for the East Asian and Pacific theater listed in the NSS. Successful completion of these operations in Korea should lead to strategic success in the theater. This combination of US operations meets the definition of a campaign. The definitional requirement for achieving the campaign objectives in a given time is the only missing element. However, time is often relative. In this case, the objectives of regional stability and economic well-being must be maintained. Therefore, this campaign requires long term and ongoing operations.

Careful campaign planning is always important. The campaign plan ties events together so they will achieve operational, and eventually, strategic success. Planning is also vital because long-term and ongoing military operations, like those in Korea, need common direction, logistical support, often involve coalition operations with friendly nations and must maintain the political and moral support of the home front. According to Joint Publication 5-0, campaign plans are imperative because they;

...communicate the commander's purpose, requirements, objectives, and concept to subordinate components and

joint forces, as well as to supporting commands and services, so that they may make necessary preparations.¹⁹

At a minimum, campaign plans usually consist of the stated goals, the concept or method to achieve those goals, and the desired endstate. The goals are what the national command authority wants to achieve. In this case, the strategic goals are East Asia and the Pacific regional stability, reunification of Korea, and economic well-being. In Korea, the operational level goals are to deter North Korean aggression and demonstrate US commitment to Korea's defense. The concept or means of the campaign are how the US military will achieve the goals, usually provided in great detail. The US Pacific Command (PACOM) concept to achieve these strategic goals relies on military forces and assets, monetary support to allies, and military programs to provide forward presence and crisis response within the region, and to create strong alliances.²⁰ In the Korea campaign, the US uses a credible forward presence as just one of the means to its objectives.

The final requirement of the campaign plan is endstate. Endstate simply describes what the region or theater will look like after the goals are achieved. It is closely tied to the objectives in that it helps to describe when the campaign has achieved success. Most importantly, endstate also focuses subordinate unit planning and military operations of the campaign toward one clear and definable set of conditions. Commanders must develop viable endstates well in advance to ensure unity of effort and guarantee success.²¹ Without an endstate, the campaign can

only achieve the desired goals through luck.

The operational endstate is the key missing element of the campaign for Korea. Clearly, when Korean reunification occurs, at least one US strategic objective will have been met. However, without a well thought out endstate for USFK, an operational level decision to remove or maintain troops in the region, made quickly during reunification, could actually jeopardize the regional stability the US desires for the region. An endstate could prevent this problem by providing the campaign its direction before reunification occurs.

In developing endstate, the planner must consider a broad spectrum of factors. Strategic and operational goals are important. However, foreign nations, domestic issues, and other military operations will usually constrain or limit endstates. In the campaign for East Asian and Pacific stability, the US should consider the influence of major regional nations as well as US domestic approval for future military presence overseas. These factors will determine the endstate for USFK. The next section begins the consideration of these by examining each of the major powers in the region and their views, concerns, and impact on likely roles or endstates for USFK after reunification.

IV. Regional Views

In working with allies it sometimes happens that they develop opinions of their own.

Winston Churchill

Understanding the regional powers' national security concerns is critical to the development of the endstate for USFK. The

Republic of Korea's views are clearly the most important operational consideration. However, Korea is only one key element of the East Asian and Pacific security environment. Japan and China will also have critical role in regional security and achievement of US strategic goals. Failure to consider Japan and China in endstate planning could jeopardize strategic success.

Republic of Korea

After reunification, Korea's security concerns will include a new military, new potential threats to national security, and a need to determine a new national security strategy. Korea will gain a significant military capability through reunification. The new Korean military will inherit the large North Korean force structure of approximately 7 million troops (active military and reserves) and their Soviet, Chinese and North Korean made equipment.²²

Based on the German experience of reunification, Korea can expect to have a great many problems integrating the North Korean forces. These problems will make it unlikely that Korea will attempt to maintain the former North Korean force structure. Issues of incompatibility, both in equipment and doctrine, would cause problems in merging the North Korean forces into the new military. Like the German military, the Koreans may decide to keep certain pieces of their former enemy's equipment. However, they will have difficulty integrating these systems into their doctrine and the Korean supply system. Units from the North may also be unable to operate successfully with ROK forces because of

their very different doctrines. There is, however, a larger issue for the Koreans that will eliminate most of the former North Korean force structure.

The size of this new Korean military would be a bigger problem. Potentially, it could consist of the following; 1.7 million active duty military personnel, 10.5 million reservists, 5,600 main battle tanks, 4500 armored personnel carriers, 11,400 artillery pieces, 27 submarines, 552 naval vessels, and 1,200 combat aircraft.²³ This new Korean military could be one of the largest standing militaries in the region. However, it is unlikely Korea will want or need a military this large. Korea will simply not be able to afford the cost of this large military while trying to fund reunification. The Koreans are also unlikely to need such a large force structure for their own security. The reduction and elimination of former North Korean forces is the likely outcome.

However the Koreans resolve these problems, the reunified military will provide Korea a self sufficient capability to defend the peninsula and its coastal areas. The current South Korean military is almost completely capable of sustaining its own defense now without any outside support.²⁴ Without a direct threat to their national security, the Koreans will not need anything larger than the current ROK military structure.

Whether Korea maintains a larger force depends on its perception of likely threats to its security. After reunification Korea will face several possible enemies or threats. The first is the threat to its land borders from China and Russia. Russia will probably not be a threat for many years. Russia is facing too

many internal problems to threaten a reunified Korea and has no real motivation to do so. China, on the other hand, is a potential threat to Korea, but like Russia would gain little from Korea. Korea would probably counter the threat from Russia and China by stationing forces near Korea's northern borders without increasing its force structure.²⁵

According to one expert, however, Korea may feel the need to counter its northern neighbors' nuclear capabilities with a capability of its own.²⁶ A combination of South Korea's power generation capability and the suspected North Korean nuclear program could produce a limited nuclear capability to counter any perceived nuclear threat. However, The likelihood of a nuclear threat to Korea is no greater than that of a conventional threat. Therefore, Korea will probably not feel threatened by Russian or Chinese nuclear weapons.

Having little concern for their northern border, the only threat Koreans will worry about is a resurgent Japan. Koreans have a long and painful history of domination by Japan. They appreciate Japan's economic might and continue to worry about Japanese intentions. As one author puts it, "...Koreans fear Japanese domination yet admire Japanese success..."²⁷ This perception of Japan lays the groundwork for their fears. It is Japanese economic power combined with their emerging desires to play a role in East Asian and Pacific affairs that worry Koreans. Those worries become fear of Japan when Koreans remember the long Japanese domination of their country.²⁸

The Koreans are already preparing for a Japanese threat to

their security. Some Koreans have attempted to move current South Korean defense policy away from a purely North Korea oriented policy to one that considers both the North and a threat from Japan. These changes are usually championed by hard-line South Koreans who are often very nationalistic. However, recent reports indicate that even members of opposition parties are beginning to push for increased defense spending to counter the threat from Japan after reunification.²⁹ One author found most Korean defense intellectuals believe that in the next 10 to 20 years, Japan will be a threat to Korean national security.³⁰

The Korean beliefs about Japan are also a result of their predictions of US involvement in Asia. Dr. Thomas Wilborn, a National Security Affairs analyst at the Strategic Studies Institute, explains,

...it is not surprising that the development of Japanese defense policy over the years is interpreted by almost all Korean observers as a trend moving inexorably toward the adoption by Japan of an active, independent diplomatic posture supported by reasonably large military forces. They believe that this trend will be accelerated by the expected reduction or possible withdrawal of US forces now in the region. South Korean defense intellectuals believe that if the US forces withdraw from the ROK, Japan will attempt to fill the resulting vacuum.³¹

Whether real or perceived, Japan is clearly the only threat Korea will face after reunification.

Likely Korean desires for continued post-reunification US military presence are a major factor in determining the endstate for the US campaign in Korea. Besides an almost natural

inclination by former North Koreans to force the US troops out, the Koreans will likely have mixed opinions of continued US military presence in Korea. Recent history, however, provides several clear indications of the probable Korean desires.

The official South Korean position on US troops in Korea has long been supportive of continued presence. This support has been a response to the threat of a North Korean invasion. However, the ROK government also desires continued US involvement and troop stationing even after the reunification. A recent statement by Admiral Preuher, the US commander in the Pacific, that troop reductions in Korea are contingent on Korean reconciliation, garnered a strong and rapid response from South Korea. The ROK defense ministry announced it was unhappy about the comments and they desired the current troop levels in Korea to remain the same.³² The ROK government believes a US troop withdrawal from Korea will signal a US withdrawal from Asia. Because of their fears of Japanese domination, they want the US to stay engaged in Asia. For the South Korean government this means US troops should remain in Korea after unification. However this official position faces some serious opposition.

The stationing of US troops in South Korea has long been a contentious issue with South Korean students, among others. Korean students have often demonstrated against US involvement in Korea. These students view the protests as a way "...to free the Korean peninsula from American imperialist influence."³³ However, there are other voices of dissent that will change the official view of US involvement in Korea. Nicholas Eberstadt believes the younger generation of Koreans will deal with international

relations differently and will force the government to respond to their desires. He writes, "a new generation of South Koreans is entering the political arena, often dissatisfied with older leaders and evidencing a strong nationalist bent."³⁴ If these nationalistic views continue they will lead the government to increased self reliance in national security and to ask for the US withdrawal after reunification.³⁵

Recent surveys support Eberstadt's beliefs. Doug Bandow cites two surveys that question the likelihood that US troops will remain in Korea even without a reunification. A 1984 survey revealed that 40% of South Koreans wanted US troops to remain only long enough for the South Korean military to become self sufficient.³⁶ Reunification will remove any question whether the Korean military has achieved self-sufficiency and will undermine the reason many Koreans tolerate US troops in their country. In 1995, a second survey found the majority of South Koreans in their 20s and 30s opposed any US troop presence in Korea. This majority has shown a marked increase in the last few years. Furthermore, this survey also found that only South Koreans over the age of 40 supported continued US presence in Korea.³⁷

Despite the government's current intentions, this emphasis on nationalism and self sufficiency will probably change government policy in the next 10 to 20 years. Therefore, it is likely that even though the Korean government will want strong military ties with the US, domestic concerns will prevent the stationing of US troops at the current levels in Korea even before reunification occurs. When reunification does occur, the South Koreans will

seek continued security guarantees from the US while simultaneously seeking the withdrawal of most US troops from Korea.

Japan

Japan has been a major power in the East Asian and Pacific region for most of the twentieth century. Its key role in US foreign policy make its needs and perceptions a vital consideration for the stationing or withdrawal of US troops in Korea after reunification.

In part, Japan provides national security for its citizens under an umbrella of US military power. The US pledged to defend Japan shortly after the Second World War as a way to guarantee regional security and prevent the re-emergence of a militarily powerful Japan. Even with this US protection, however, Japan worries about several threats to her national security.

Japan sees China as an emerging threat to both regional stability and to its own national security. China's military build up and modernization will eventually give it the ability to project its military power throughout the region. Coupled with Chinese desires to regain control of its lost territories, this military expansion is a threat to the region. Japan is threatened not because China will invade Japan, but because any disruption in regional security will prevent Japan from maintaining its economic strength.³⁸ Any threat to Japan's economy is seen as a threat to its national security. As a result, Japan is struggling for a way to deal with China's capabilities in the region. Some analysts in

Japan feel that China's goal is to take the role of the US in East Asia. They believe China wants to be the power broker and guarantor of regional stability.³⁹ Faced with this Chinese problem, Japan now looks to the US for help in countering the threat from the mainland.

Tied to the Chinese threat are Japan's worries about Russia. Although not a military threat in the region, Russia is selling arms and military capabilities to China and others in the region. This will have a long term effect on regional stability and Japanese national security. Japan fears this continued Russian involvement in the region.⁴⁰

More important to the future of USFK, the Japanese also fear Korea. Japan and Korea have a long history of hatred. Japan, however, has usually been the aggressor and has occupied the Korean peninsula several times. The last Japanese occupation of Korea during World War II still rates as one of the most brutal periods of Korean history. Yet, Japan now fears Korea.⁴¹

Some Korean analysts see the Japanese involvement in talks with North Korea as a way for Japan to guarantee the continued separation of Korea.⁴² However, even if this is true, Japan has come to accept that Korean unification will be good for regional stability.⁴³ Sadly, this has not alleviated any Japanese fears of a reunified Korea.

Specifically, Japan fears the military and economic capabilities of a reunified and nationalistic Korea with anti-Japanese feelings. North Korea already has the capability to fire missiles into Japan and is reportedly developing nuclear weapons.

After reunification, these capabilities and the economic power of the South could give the Koreans a capability to fire nuclear weapons at Japan. Japanese believe the Koreans are naturally aggressive and make it known that US troops are currently needed in South Korea to keep both the North **and** the South from attacking.⁴⁴

The Japanese believe these aggressions will be directed at them after reunification. A recent study found that when asked about future security threats, Japanese defense and foreign affairs specialists always mentioned Korea.⁴⁵ In some cases this fear is escalated by the media. One respected Japanese international affairs expert and journalist stirred up a great deal of concern both in Japan and in Korea about reunification. Kenichi Takemura said,

An all-out invasion of Japan by Korea is inevitable if Korea is reunified...it will be a blitz attack like the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait...therefore it is in Japan's best interest to help North Korea economically so the Korean peninsula remains divided as now.⁴⁶

This televised statement appealed to some intellectuals and many young people in Japan who admire Takemura.⁴⁷ Although it was one man's opinion, it seems to echo the official Japanese fears of the possibilities and capabilities of a reunified Korea.

The threats from China, Russia, and even Korea, are small compared to Japan's biggest security concern. The Japanese, like the Koreans, fear US withdrawal from the region. Japan relies on a mutual defense treaty with the US to provide for the defense of

its territory.⁴⁸ This agreement has allowed Japan to forgo major defense investment and concentrate on its economic well being. This agreement and continued US desires for stability in East Asia and the Pacific give Japan a way to deal with the threats from China, Russia, and Korea. Without US involvement in Asia, Japan must face these threats alone. One anonymous high ranking Japanese official has said that, "...if the US were to withdraw forces (from the region), conflict between Japan, China and Russia would be 'inevitable.'" ⁴⁹ Another, who also prefers anonymity, has said,

As long as we are confident that the United States would defend us against all threats even from regional powers...I think there is nothing to worry about. If that changed it would be a very different situation.⁵⁰

Japan needs the US presence in Asia to counter perceived threats to its national security. Any US withdrawal from the region will bring into question US commitment to Japanese security.

According to Professor Takashi Inoguchi, the Japanese already question US commitment.⁵¹ This has led to developments which are potentially damaging to regional stability. Japan is reexamining its role in the region and beginning to send its troops to participate in United Nations operations. This new role developed in part because the US desired more allied participation in these missions to offset dwindling US military resources. The US Republican primary of 1996 also resulted in Japanese preparations for increasing US isolationism. The popular US republican candidate Pat Buchanan's win in the New Hampshire primary was seen

as a signal of increasing US isolationism. Pat Buchanan campaigned for the withdrawal of US forces from Japan and Korea and closing of the US southern border.⁵² As a result of these fears, Japan now places the majority of its planning emphasis on regional affairs and developing a capable military force structure. Ten years ago, the major effort was in developing and maintaining the US-Japanese alliance. These are clear indications that Japan fears a US withdrawal from the region.⁵³ These trends will endanger regional stability if the US withdraws too much or too fast from Korea or East Asia after reunification.

China

China will also affect any decisions regarding US troops in Korea after reunification. China supports Korean reunification on terms favorable to itself. It will not welcome a reunified Korea that is allied with and dominated by the US and Japan. Korea would control 800 kilometers of China's southern border after reunification and this would be a real security concern to Beijing.⁵⁴

Besides Korea, China will continue to view the US and Japan as a threat to its security and aspirations in the region. Although China's aspirations are difficult to determine, many experts believe China would like to be the one country with superpower influence in the region.⁵⁵ This means China must find a way to replace the US in that role. China has also begun to reassert its claims to territories in the region. Renewed

interests in Taiwan and the Spratley Islands are the most obvious examples. China is modernizing its military and developing a force projection capability. Since 1989, China has increased defense spending by 50 percent. Its navy is already becoming an offensive, modern fleet which will have an advantage over all other regional navies.⁵⁶ The only countries which are a major threat to China achieving its goals are the US and Japan and, potentially, a reunified Korea.

China is distrustful of US military involvement in East Asia and probably would not support further troop stationing in Korea after reunification.⁵⁷ China would view any US troops in reunified Korea as a direct threat to Chinese national security goals. Even if the US gives these troops the mission to defend Korea, China is the threat they would logically be defending against. China can not achieve her national security goals with continued US involvement in Korea or East Asia.

These regional views are major operational and strategic considerations effecting the post-reunification endstate for USFK. Korea will not support the continued stationing of American troops in a reunified Korea without a serious change in domestic outlook or major reduction of USFK. This change would come about only as a result of a direct threat to the security of Korea. Japan, on the other hand, will support continued US presence in Korea and East Asia. Any withdrawal of US troops from Korea or the region will signal a lack of US commitment to Japanese security and force the Japanese to develop more military self reliance. This Japanese reaction to US disengagement has the potential to upset

regional stability. China, on the other hand, would be glad to see the US forces depart Korea after reunification.⁵⁸ The US departure from Korea would shore up Chinese national security and forecast the eventual withdrawal of the US military from Asia. China could begin to assert its status and power in the region after the US withdrawal. Again this will fracture regional stability.

These regional considerations will not stand alone in determining the endstate for USFK. US objectives and domestic affairs will also be a key determinant of the endstate. The next section examines these likely US goals after the reunification and possible ways to achieve them.

V. US Views

At a minimum, US Foreign Policy should follow a path consistent with US interests that the American public can support.

Center for Strategic and International Studies

The greatest problem is simply the asymmetry of America and Korea; for fifty years the United States has meant everything to Korea, but Korea still means little to the United States.

Bruce Cummings "Time to End the Korean War"

The United States' objectives after Korean reunification are the key to whether its troops will remain in Korea. The US will continue to maintain regional stability and security in East Asia and the Pacific as a way to guarantee the economic prosperity of the region. One author clearly describes the importance of the region to the US;

No region of the world is more important to US vital interests than the Asia-Pacific. The region absorbs more American exports (\$130 Billion in 1992) each year than any other region in the world. Millions of American jobs depend directly or indirectly on commerce with Asia. The United States has fought three wars in Asia in fifty years. The American people have a vital stake in the prevention of future conflict in the region.⁵⁹

As a result of these considerations, the US strategic goals in the region will probably not change after reunification.

At the operational level, the US will still have standing bilateral and mutual defense treaties with several Asian nations. The US-Republic of Korea Mutual Defense Treaty of 1953 will continue to receive support from both governments even after North Korea is gone. The other vital US defense agreement is the US-Japan treaty. The US will continue to guarantee the national security of Japan. Because of these and other treaties, the US will have a standing requirement to maintain a military capability in the East Asian and Pacific region to meet any threats to US or allied interests.

These future threats to US interests in East Asia and the Pacific will be relatively few. However, any breach in regional stability could threaten US strategic interests. Recent history suggests that breaches are possible. China's regional aspirations to reclaim territory in the Spratley Islands and Chinese naval operations off Taiwan have caused some recent concern with the US and its allies. Another possibility could occur should the US withdraw from the region. According to several experts, Japan and China may begin a conflict to determine who will fill the void

left in the region by the US withdrawal.⁶⁰

Given these possibilities and the US strategic objectives, the US will need to remain engaged in the region. Part of this engagement will include overseas positioning of US military units. US domestic support for these operational level policies will determine what is an acceptable level of engagement.

US domestic support includes both the support of the general public and the support of the US Congress. Both of these bodies have already shown a general lack of support for US military presence in the region. This is especially true of Korea. Nicholas Eberstadt states;

Korea has remained an isolated and poorly understood spot on the map for most American citizens and policy-makers alike. Indeed, the gap between the area's international importance, on the one hand, and our statesmen's comprehension of its affairs, on the other, may be wider today for Korea than any other part of the world.⁶¹

Even with the present threat of North Korea and its potential harm to US interests, the US public does not support US troops in Korea. One study showed that only 39% of the American public supported US troops in Korea, while 80% of international policy experts strongly supported the American defense of South Korea.⁶² Most likely, Americans will not understand the need for USFK after reunification. As one author put it,

...US political leadership will be challenged...to articulate the reasons for its post-Cold War military commitments and presence in Asia and the Western Pacific to the American public in a clear and convincing manner...⁶³

Congress too, must be convinced of the importance of maintaining troops in Korea after reunification. However, much like their constituents, US Congressmen are also unlikely to support further troop basing in Korea. The Congress is struggling with balancing the Federal budget and controlling governmental spending. This trend will likely continue in the future. Therefore, the Congress will propose cuts in US defense spending that will likely result in reductions both at home and abroad. The reunification of Germany and the collapse of the Soviet threat resulted in a 44% reduction in US troops stationed overseas.⁶⁴ The reunification of Korea is likely to have the same effect. US officials have already indicated that troop reductions in Asia are likely even before reunification.⁶⁵ The National Defense University also predicts that continued overseas presence and forward deployments of US troops will likely face cuts as Congressmen deal with the federal budget and potential military base closings in their home states.⁶⁶ These are clear indications the Congress will not support the maintenance of current troop levels in Korea after reunification.

The current force deployments in Korea will not stand after reunification for lack of US domestic support. Therefore, the US military must look for new methods to achieve both its operational and strategic goals in Korea and the East Asian and Pacific region after the reunification. This monograph will evaluate three possible solutions to this problem.

First, the US could conduct a partial withdrawal of forces in

Korea. Under this plan, all or most ground troops except for essential logistical units would be withdrawn. Forward prepositioning of brigade size sets of equipment in Korea would allow the rapid reinforcement of Korea or deployments within the region. Some Air Force and Navy units would remain in Korea to serve the forward presence and force projection needs of the US military. Korea, in sense, would become a forward staging base for the projection of US military power into and throughout the region.

The Second option is complete withdrawal of USFK from Korea to bases elsewhere in the region to establish presence. US forces from Korea would move to the new bases. These Asian or Pacific forward staging bases and the US Navy would allow the US to rapidly project power into the region when events require additional military forces. The US could use these bases as a stepping stone to meet its mutual defense requirements for both Korea and Japan. Likely spots for the staging bases would be Japan, Guam, Hawaii, or a combination of these.

The third option is to withdraw the USFK units from the East Asian and Pacific region to the continental United States. These forces would then become a contingency force with a dedicated mission to respond to crises in the East Asian and Pacific region. The US Navy and the participation of these contingency forces in regional joint and combined exercises and training would provide overseas presence.

These options for the future of USFK will allow the US to meet its strategic objectives in the East Asian and Pacific region. The next section will analyze these courses of action to

determine which option is best.

VI. Analysis

..it would have been foolish if they had not begun by carefully reviewing the whole chain of events that success or failure would be likely to bring in consequence of the initial step, and which would lead to peace.

Clausewitz

Because endstates set the direction for all operations in the campaign, planners must carefully evaluate them to insure they reflect a desired and supportable objective. Given the three options for USFK, this section will use evaluation criteria from Pollack and Cha to determine which option is best.⁶⁷ This evaluation will test each course of action by nation for suitability, feasibility, and flexibility. Suitability asks whether the option can meet vital national goals and interests at both the operational and strategic level. Does the option fit with national security objectives? Feasibility deals with whether an option will gain enough political and domestic support, at an acceptable cost, to be put into action. Does it have a reasonable prospect of achievement? Flexibility examines whether an option can adapt to unanticipated events or changes in relationships with other nations. Does the option provide maximum adaptability to change? These evaluation criteria will determine which option is most acceptable for each actor (US, Korea, other states) in the region and allow for a determination of which operational endstate is best for post-reunification USFK.

United States

Suitability examines which option is most likely to meet the US national security goals in East Asia and the Pacific after reunification. It must also consider the US operational level goals in reunified Korea. US goals in the region are unlikely to change after reunification. Strategically, the US will still seek regional stability as a way of insuring its economic capabilities in the region. At the operational level, the US will also continue to meet the requirements and obligations of its bilateral defense treaties. Currently, these requirements call for 100,000 US troops to be forward deployed in the region.⁶⁸

A complete withdrawal of USFK units to the continental United States would seriously undermine the US commitment to regional stability. Regional powers will see this option as a signal that the US is unconcerned with its commitment to Korean defense and as a harbinger of a strategic withdrawal from the region. This would hurt US credibility and potentially result in a power struggle in Asia to replace the withdrawing US forces. This option can not adequately meet US goals in the region and could actually lead to the failure of US strategy in the region. By definition, it is not suitable.

A withdrawal from Korea to Asian staging bases is more suitable. It does not substantially undermine US commitment to regional stability and provides the US military a flexible response capability to respond anywhere in the region. It does, however, raise questions about the US commitment to Korean security. A withdrawal to Japan, for instance, may be seen as a

threat to Korea or as an example of the US taking sides in the region. However, US military involvement, combined training exercises, and practice deployments to the Korean peninsula could serve to eliminate those fears. This option is suitable for meeting US national security objectives and operational goals in Korea.

The partial withdrawal option, although not optimal for US security concerns, is the most suitable for the US. It will signal an unchanging commitment by the US to regional security and to its treaty partners. The extensive capability for rapid reinforcement of Korea and power projection in the region will allow the US to maintain its valuable and necessary presence in the region. This is especially true if the ground forces of USFK are relocated within the region where they can quickly fall in on the prepositioned brigade sets of equipment stationed in Korea. Given other factors, this seems to be the most suitable option for projected US security needs and operational goals after the Korean reunification.

Flexibility determines if an option is adaptable. The US loses a great deal of its capability to react to change in the region or Korea by the complete withdrawal option. Although forces will be available elsewhere in the region, the great Pacific distances will limit the capability to respond quickly to Korea. Korea will still be important because of the US's treaty obligations to defend Korea. An option that can not respond to Korea can not pass the flexibility criteria. The remaining options provide more flexibility to the US military to react to crises in the region and Korea. With the need to react to Korea

still intact, the partial withdrawal option seems to provide the most flexibility to the US military.

In the end, feasibility will play the major role in determining the US option. Feasibility is the consideration of which option is most likely to receive US domestic and political support. Both the Congress and US citizens will see Korean reunification as a way to reduce defense spending by cutting back on the overseas deployment of military forces. None of these options, however, will reduce the size of the US commitment to the East Asian and Pacific region. This will cause some feasibility problems for each of the options.

Unfortunately, the US military has created domestic conditions that will make the feasibility issue even more difficult. In a sense, the military is undermining the nation's strategic goals. The goal of regional stability and its rewards are well understood by the Congress and at least some of the American public.⁶⁹ In the past, the US military has focused on North Korea as the great threat to this stability.⁷⁰ When reunification removes that threat, the region will seemingly be more stable and secure than it has since the end of World War II. Many Americans will view it as a great victory for regional and world stability. When this regional stability is achieved the US military will have met its campaign objectives in the region. Without a direct threat to Korea, or any other nation in the region for that matter, there will be no need to maintain troops in Korea.

This perception will cause both Congress and the public to clamor for the troops to come home. Therefore, the complete

withdrawal of USFK forces to the United States will be the most feasible option for US domestic concerns. This withdrawal would allow for further cuts in the military and deactivation of units. As long as some units in the US are earmarked for contingencies and training in Korea, this plan will be more than acceptable as long as the situation in other theaters remains relatively unchanged.

The other options will meet with much less success in American domestic affairs. The Congress and American public may see the need for contingency forces in the region to deal with US interests and crises in theater. That willingness to maintain a presence in theater was key to continuing the forward stationing of some American forces in Europe after the Cold War. If there is a perceived need for US forces, the American public will continue to support an overseas presence in the region.

However, if any USFK forces remain in the region, it will be at some cost in manpower. Even though US Presidents and their senior cabinet officials have repeatedly promised a minimum of 100,000 troops in the region, the US will reduce forces in East Asia and the Pacific.⁷¹ The former USFK units will be the victims of these withdrawals. For either of the options that maintain USFK troops in the region to be feasible, the US military will have to provide a greater capability with fewer troops deployed. This modification will be more acceptable and feasible than any option to maintain the current level of USFK forces in the region.

Korea

For an option to be suitable, the Koreans would expect it to meet their national security needs. After the reunification, the Koreans will still expect the US to fulfill the requirements of the 1953 Mutual Defense Treaty. Consequently, the Koreans will want a continued US presence in the region to counterbalance the potential threat they perceive from Japan.⁷² The Koreans would expect withdrawn USFK forces to remain in the region and respond rapidly to any threats to Korean security. The option to withdraw USFK units to the US would not be suitable or acceptable to the Korean government. This move will demonstrate a lack of US commitment to the defense of Korea and Korean security needs. Many in the government will also see it as an announcement of the eventual withdrawal of US forces from the entire region and a threat to the regional stability which has allowed Korea's economic success.

The Koreans will also expect the operational endstate for USFK to be flexible enough to support any changes in Korean national security. The options that allow for the rapid return of US forces to Korea would be the most acceptable. Again, the option of complete withdrawal of USFK to the US would probably not provide enough flexibility to support Korean needs.

As it does in the US, the feasibility criteria will change some of these views. As the Korean people become more nationalistic, they will probably look to have the majority of USFK withdraw from the Korean peninsula. The force reduction option, therefore, is probably not the most feasible solution for

USFK. If the Koreans do accept it, they will most likely want USFK reduced to a level much lower than this option provides. The other options are much more feasible.

Given the Korean views on suitability, flexibility, and feasibility, the option to withdraw USFK from Korea and station them on bases elsewhere in the region will probably be the most acceptable to the Koreans. This option continues to provide for the defense of Korea and maintain regional stability without the stationing of American troops on Korean soil. This is particularly well suited for a Korea which is becoming more nationalistic and increasingly self reliant.

Regional Actors

The final consideration for the best option must be to determine what is most acceptable to the other regional nations such as Japan, China and members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). ASEAN includes Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and Brunei. As the major actors in the region, these regional actors are important to the US goal of regional stability and economic well being.

To be suitable to these nations, the US options must meet the security needs of the region. In this case, most nations in the region will continue to desire the economic benefits that regional stability provides. These states see the US as the nation most likely to be capable of guaranteeing this stability. The only exception to this general good feeling toward the US is found in China. China would rather see the US withdraw from the region so

it could become the stabilizing power in the region. However, China's own domestic problems and military inability to project power prevent, and will continue to prevent, it from achieving this goal in the next 10 to 20 years. Therefore, the Chinese will grudgingly accept and support the US maintenance of stability until China is closer to realizing its wishes.

Clearly then, the option to completely withdraw USFK units from the region is unacceptable to most nations of East Asia and the Pacific. It is unsuitable, because such a withdrawal would leave a power vacuum that would have to be filled by one or more states. Since many states in the region fear Japan, as well as some of their other neighbors, US withdrawal would lead to instability.

The other options are almost equally acceptable as long as the US remains in the region with the same number of troops or equal capabilities. The only problems would develop out of where in Asia the former USFK units which depart Korea would go. That is a problem of feasibility.

The Japanese would like to see the USFK troops remain in Korea. Any attempt to move these forces to Japan would be an unfeasible option. The Japanese people will resist attempts to place more American troops in Japan on new or existing bases. As one author put it, "...in virtually every Japanese community, the thought of a new US base is arguably less popular than that of a new toxic-waste dump."⁷³ Existing bases are already limited in size and unpopular with the local populace.

This brings up a potential feasibility problem with transferring USFK units within the theater. New bases may be hard

to find. Although the regional states want the US to remain, they may be unwilling to accept American troops on their territory. However, because the ASEAN states desire stability and US military presence, diplomatic efforts may gain some bases for the displaced American units.⁷⁴ This possibility should not rule out the problem with feasibility. The US will probably face an environment in which fewer American troops (less than 100,000) with greater capabilities will have to substitute for withdrawing USFK units to new Asian bases.

From this analysis several points are apparent. First, The option of complete withdrawal to the US is not suitable to the US, Korea, or regional nations. Second, The partial withdrawal option is not feasible for the Korean people and probably the US as well. The Koreans will not accept long term post-reunification basing of USFK in Korea. Third, the option to withdraw USFK to other Asian bases is not feasible to the Japanese and may also be unfeasible to other regional states. Fourth, despite the Asian resistance to the option of withdrawing USFK to other Asian bases, this option is the most suitable and flexible for the US and Korea if bases can be found. Finally, these points clearly demonstrate that the solution to the campaign endstate problem will be not be easy. The simple solution of moving the USFK units, regardless of their destination, is unlikely to be acceptable to the US or its allies.

The most feasible and suitable solution for the USFK endstate is probably a modification of these options. After Korean reunification, the US should withdraw USFK, maintain a capability

to rapidly reintroduce forces into Korea and throughout the region, and replace the manpower cuts with more capability in the region. The best way to replace manpower is to use naval and air force capabilities as the US forward presence in the region. Ground units withdrawn from Korea would return to the US. However, these units would become a contingency force for the region. This option seems to be the most suitable, feasible, and flexible option for the US, Korea, and the region. It protects national interests, meets domestic desires, and provides a capability to react and adapt to change.

The campaign endstate for Korean reunification should reflect this option. After reunification, the US Forces Korea should return the 8th US Army, the US 2d Infantry Division, and their support units to the United States. The US should maintain the 2d Infantry Division at close to its current strength and make it a contingency force for the region. This will give the US the flexibility to deal with crises and maintain its treaty commitments to the region. If possible, US Air Force and Naval units stationed in Korea should remain to provide rapid force projection throughout the region and readily available support to Korea's defense. If that is unacceptable to the Koreans, then the Air Force units should be withdrawn to the US. The US should, at a minimum, attempt to retain some basing rights for its Navy in Korea. Along with Naval basing, the Army may be able to preposition at least one brigade set of equipment afloat in Korea. This prepositioning would allow the rapid deployment of contingency forces into Korea and throughout the region. Finally, the US should maintain its current US Naval presence in the region

to establish overseas presence and initial force projection.

This endstate will allow the US to maintain its commitments to its allies in the region and will continue to assist in maintaining regional stability. Although it does incur troop withdrawals, it will provide a far more capable and flexible US military presence that is not focused on just one contingency. It will provide US leadership an improved capability to wield US military power in the region. The reduction of American troops in Korea will satisfy the more nationalistic Korea and its citizens after reunification. On the US domestic front, this option is feasible because it withdraws USFK and provides more capability at potentially a lower cost.

This endstate will require support from the other elements of US national power to be successful. The US military's campaign plan to achieve US operational goals in Korea and strategic goals in the region should include these. Diplomatically, the US needs to prepare its Pacific allies for this endstate. The US must convince its allies that the US withdrawal from Korea is simply a way to replace an inadequate and outmoded US military presence with a more flexible and capable strategy. It will not demonstrate a lessening of US commitment to the region. At the same time, US leadership should work to achieve a regional multilateral agreement that will foster regional stability and security. Current bilateral arrangements will not be sufficient for regional stability in the future and will probably only force the US to choose between allies in a crisis. Collective security will provide the region and the US with an even greater capability to maintain stability in the region.

At home, US leadership should continue to emphasize the importance of the East Asian and Pacific region to the US economy and vital interests. This should include a description of potential crises and their effect on the US. At the same time, the US should not focus on North Korea as the exclusive destabilizing factor in East Asia. The proposed campaign endstate for post-reunification USFK also needs to be public knowledge. Without this emphasis, the US public and Congress will seek the complete and immediate withdrawal of American troops from Korea after reunification.

With this endstate, as with all others, the US must direct its military planning and operations toward its strategic goals and the achievement of the endstate. The campaign for Korea, and to some extent for the region, will be complete when this endstate is accomplished.

VII. Conclusion

The process of planning for the longer term must begin now, rather than when abrupt or anticipated change takes place on the peninsula.

Jonathan Pollack

Without adequate operational level campaign planning to determine the endstate for USFK, the US may fail to achieve its strategic goals in the East Asian and Pacific region. Ongoing US military operations are setting the conditions for operational success in Korea. However, these same successful military operations, without direction or long term focus, could cause a strategic failure in the region.

The option provided in this monograph is not the only solution. However, as an endstate it provides the necessary focus to tie operational plans and results to strategic goals. It also demonstrates the real difficulty of developing an endstate at the operational level that will lead to strategic success. The problems of conducting campaign planning in isolation or under pressure of reacting to events are clear. In the end, the US military must conduct this problematic operational analysis and campaign planning now to develop the official endstate for USFK. Without it, operational achievements will not lead to strategic success.

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65. Paul Richter, "US Pacific Troop Strength May Be Cut, Admiral Says." Los Angeles Times, February 4, 1997 and Foreign Broadcast Information Service, "PRC Daily: Shift in Seoul Military Policy." Yonhap, May 6, 1994, and FBIS "Japan: Perry says US to cut Asia Troops if Koreas reunite."
66. Binnendijk, Strategic Assessment 1996, 126.
67. Pollack and Cha, A New Alliance for the Next Century, 39-42.
68. The number 100,000 is not listed as a goal in US security documents. The NSS and NMS mention that current US Pacific troop strength is 100,000. (United States, A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement, 40 and United States, National Military Strategy, 7) In December, 1996, President Clinton committed the US to maintaining 100,000 troops in the Pacific. (Richter, "US Pacific Troop Strength May Be Cut, Admiral Says," 5) In February 1997, the US State Department again stated the importance of 100,000 US troops in the Pacific. (Kelly and Lea, "US Asia Troop Cuts 'On the Table,'" 1). However, there have been recent statements by US Secretary of Defense William Cohen and others that question whether this number will stand in the future (See endnote 5).
69. Berry, The Invitation to Struggle, 21-22.

70. United States, National Military Strategy, 2, United States, A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement, 40, and Cumings, "Time to End the Korean War," 78.

71. US Department of State, "Joint Statement: Ensuring Peace and Stability in Northeast Asia," US Department of State Dispatch 6, no. 47, November 20, 1995, and Foreign Broadcast Information Service, "US Envoy Says Apology is Needed Before Talks Can Take Place." Yonhap, November 10, 1996, and FBIS "Japan: Perry Says US to Cut Asia Troops if Koreas Reunite," and FBIS "ROK: US Forces Expected to Remain After Reunification." The Chungang Ilbo, April 3, 1996, and Richter, "US Pacific Troop Strength..." 5.

72. Richter, "US Pacific Troop Strength May Be Cut, Admiral Says," 1.

73. Witter, "US Isolationist Trend..." A19.

74. Thomas L. Wilborn, Stability, Security Structures, and US Policy for East Asia and the Pacific (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 1993) 2, 25 (footnote 10).

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